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SUBJECT: BURUNDI PEACE PROCESS STALLED

REF: PRETORIA 475

Classified By: Political Counselor Raymond Brown. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) DFA Special Envoy to the Great Lakes, Kingsley Mamabolo, expressed frustration to PolCouns and PolOff on 8 April about Burundi's stalled peace process. Only a month ago, Mamabolo was upbeat about negotiations, believing the FNL was serious about the peace process (reftel). Mamabolo now admits that nothing has moved in the past three months since South Africa received an AU extension to continue its mediation efforts. In fact, he said that nothing has really changed since they started negotiating in November 2005; "the facilitation is back to square one," he said. Mamabolo believes the problem boils down to one of "political will," which he does not believe the FNL has. He complained that over the years, everyone has come in from the bush except the FNL, "which keeps shifting the goal posts."

¶2. (C) Mamabolo gave numerous examples of what he considers FNL intransigence. He noted that the FNL has rejected the conferrance of immunity via an executive order, instead demanding that immunity be granted by Parliament and that it be given to the "Palipehutu-FNL," not just FNL, to ensure that their ethnicity is recognized (despite the fact that political parties based on ethnicity are unconstitutional). The rebels are also demanding vehicles (specifying 4 x 4s), money to pay off debts incurred in the bush (approximately \$US 11 million), and a French-speaking South African facilitator (even though FNL negotiator Jan Van Eck speaks no French). (NOTE: Jan Van Eck, who has negotiated on behalf of the FNL for years through a translator admitted to PolOff on 10 April that this demand is solely intended to remove Mamabolo from the facilitation (septel). END NOTE)

¶3. (C) As for South Africa's position, Mamabolo admitted that he is "under pressure" from his leadership to resolve the issue. "We have a South African batallion there, doing nothing, yet they have to be fed everyday!" he said. Mamabolo believes the rebels understand that the SAG is anxious to make progress, and are trying to use this to their advantage. However, he hinted that the SAG may wash its hand of the process, confiding that there are some in the SAG who are ready to hand the problem over to the subregion. "If the rebels are not ready, we cannot force the issue," he concluded.

